# THE WORLD.

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By *ADAM FITZ-ADAM.*

*To be continued every* THURSDAY.

THURSDAY, *February* the 8th, 1753.

To Mr. *FITZ-ADAM.*

*Totum mundum agit hiſtrio.*

SIR,

AS you have choſen the whole world for your province, one may reaſonably ſuppoſe, that you will not neglect that epitome of it, the theatre. Moſt of your predeceſſors have beſtowed their favourite pains upon it: the learned and the critics (generally two very diſtinct denominations of men) have employed many hours and much paper in comparing the ancient and modern ſtage. I ſhall not undertake to decide a queſtion which ſeems to me ſo impoſſible to be deter-

determined, as which have moſt merit, plays written in a dead language, and which we can only read; or ſuch as we every day ſee acted inimitably, in a tongue familiar to us, and adapted to our common ideas and cuſtoms. The only preference that I ſhall pretend to give to the modern ſtage over Greece and Rome, relates to the ſubject of the preſent letter: I mean the daily progreſs we make towards nature. This will ſtartle any bigot to Euripides, who perhaps will immediately demand, whether Juliet's nurſe be a more natural goſſip than Electra's or Medea's. But I did not hint at the repreſentation of either perſons or characters. The improvement of nature, which I had in view, alluded to thoſe excellent exhibitions of the animal or inanimate parts of the creation, which are furniſhed by the worthy philoſophers Rich and Garrick; the latter of whom has refined on his competitor; and having perceived that art was become ſo perfect that it was neceſſary to mimick it by nature, he has happily introduced a caſcade of real water.

I know there are perſons of a ſyſtematic turn, who affirm that the audience are not delighted with this beautiful water-fall, from the reality of the element, but merely becauſe they are pleaſed with the novelty of any thing that is out of its proper place. Thus they tell you, that the town is charmed with a genuine caſcade upon the ſtage, and were in raptures laſt year with one of Tin at Vauxhall. But this is certainly prejudice: the world, Mr. Fitz-Adam, though never fated with ſhow, is ſick of fiction. I foreſee the time approaching, when deluſion will not be ſuffered in any part of the drama: the inimitable Serpent in Orpheus and Eurydice, and the amorous Oſtrich in the Sorcerer, ſhall be replaced by real monſters from Afric. It is well known that the pantomime

mime of the Genii narrowly eſcaped being damned on my lady Maxim's obſerving very judiciouſly, *that the brick-kiln was horridly executed, and did not ſmell at all like one.*

WHEN this entire caſtigation of improprieties is brought about, the age will do juſtice to one of the firſt reformers of the ſtage, Mr. Cibber, who eſſayed to introduce a taſte for real nature in his Cæſar in Egypt, and treated the audience with real—not ſwans indeed, for that would have been too bold an attempt in the dawn of truth, but very perſonable geeſe. The inventor, like other original genius's, was treated ill by a barbarous age: yet I can venture to affirm, that a ſtricter adherence to reality would have ſaved even thoſe times from being ſhocked by abſurdities, always incidental to fiction. I myſelf remember, how, much about that æra, the great Seneſino, repreſenting Alexander at the ſiege of Oxydracæ, ſo far forgot himſelf in the heat of conqueſt, as to ſtick his ſword into one of the paſteboard ſtones of the wall of the town, and bore it in triumph before him as he entered the breach; a puerility ſo renowned a General could never have committed, if the ramparts had been built, as in this enlightened age they would be, of actual brick and ſtone.

WILL you forgive an elderly man, Mr. Fitz-Adam, if he cannot help recollecting another paſſage that happened in his youth, and to the ſame excellent performer? He was ſtepping into Armida's enchanted bark; but treading ſhort, as he was more attentive to the accompanyment of the orcheſtra than to the breadth of the ſhore, he fell proſtrate, and lay for ſome time in great pain, with the edge of a wave running into his ſide. In the preſent ſtate of things, the worſt that could have happened

happened to him, would have been drowning; a fate far more becoming Rinaldo, eſpecially in the ſight of a Britiſh audience!

IF you will allow me to wander a little from the ſtage, I ſhall obſerve that this purſuit of nature is not confined to the theatre, but operates where one ſhould leaſt expect to meet it, in our faſhions. The fair part of the creation are ſhedding all covering of the head, diſplay their unveiled charming treſſes, and if I may ſay ſo, are daily moulting the reſt of their cloaths. What lovely fall of ſhoulders, what ivory necks, what ſnowy breaſts in all the pride of nature, are continually diveſted of art and ornament!

IN gardening, the ſame love of nature prevails. Clipt hedges, avenues, regular platforms, ſtrait canals have been for ſome time very properly exploded. There is not a citizen who does not take more pains to torture his acre and half into irregularities, than he formerly would have employed to make it as formal as his cravat. Kent, the friend of nature, was the Calvin of this reformation, but like the other champion of truth, after having routed tinſel and trumpery, with the true zeal of a founder of a ſect he puſhed his diſcipline to the deformity of holineſs: not content with baniſhing ſymmetry and regularity, he imitated nature even in her blemiſhes, and planted dead trees and mole-hills, in oppoſition to parterres and quincunxes.

THE laſt branch of our faſhions into which the cloſe obſervation of nature has been introduced, is our deſſerts. A ſubject I have not room now to treat at large, but which yet demands a few words, and not improperly in this paper, as I ſee them a little in the light of a pantomime. Jellies, biſcuits, ſugar-plums and creams have

have long given way to harlequins, gondoliers, Turks, Chineſe, and ſhepherdeſſes of Saxon china. But theſe, unconnected, and only ſeeming to wander among groves of curled paper and ſilk flowers, were ſoon diſcovered to be too inſipid and unmeaning. By degrees whole meadows of cattle, of the ſame brittle materials, ſpread themſelves over the whole table; cottages roſe in ſugar, and temples in barley-ſugar; pigmy Neptunes in cars of cockle-ſhells triumphed over oceans of looking-glaſs, or ſeas of ſilver tiſſue; and at length the whole ſyſtem of Ovid's metamorphoſis ſucceeded to all the transformations which Chloe and other great profeſſors had introduced into the ſcience of hieroglyphic eating. Confectioners found their trade moulder away, while toymen and china ſhops were the only faſhionable purveyors of the laſt ſtage of polite entertainments. Women of the firſt quality came home from Chevenix's laden with dolls and babies, not for their children, but their houſekeeper.———At laſt even theſe puerile puppet-ſhows are ſinking into diſuſe, and more manly ways of concluding our repaſts are eſtabliſhed. Gigantic figures ſucceed to pigmies; and if the preſent taſte continues, Ryſbrack and other neglected ſtatuaries, who might have adorned Grecian ſalons, though not Grecian deſſerts, may come into vogue. It is known that a celebrated confectioner (ſo the architects of our deſſerts ſtill humbly call themſelves) complained, that after having prepared a middle diſh of gods and goddeſſes eighteen feet high, his lord would not cauſe the cieling of his parlour to be demoliſhed to facilitate their entrèe: "*Imaginez vous*, "ſaid he, *que mi lord n'a pas voulu faire oter le plafond.*"

I ſhall mention but two inſtances of glorious magnificence and taſte in deſſerts, in which foreigners have ſurpaſſed